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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH
REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF
INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES
AND PEOPLES

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRD REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP

Acting Chairman: Mr. Utula Utuoc SAMANA (Papua New Guinea)

1. The Working Group held its 142nd meeting on 25 July 1996.

1. Question of holding a series of meetings away from Headquarters

2. In connection with the question of holding a series of meetings away from Headquarters, the Working Group recalled that the General Assembly, by paragraph 6 of its resolution 1654 (XVI) of 27 November 1961, had authorized the Special Committee to meet elsewhere than at United Nations Headquarters whenever and wherever such meetings might be required for the effective discharge of its functions. By paragraph 3 (9) of the programme of action for the full implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, contained in General Assembly resolution 2621 (XXV) of 12 October 1970, the Assembly had directed the Committee to continue to hold meetings away from Headquarters as appropriate.

3. The Working Group decided to recommend that in that connection the Special Committee consider accepting such invitations as might be received in 1997 and that, when particulars of such meetings become known, it request the Secretary-General to seek the necessary budgetary provisions in accordance with established procedure.

2. Representation at seminars, meetings and conferences of intergovernmental and other organizations

4. The Working Group proposed that the Special Committee recommend to the General Assembly that the Committee should continue to be represented at seminars, meetings and conferences organized by United Nations bodies and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations active in the field of decolonization. In keeping with its decision of 16 February 1996, the Committee would authorize its Chairman to hold consultations, as appropriate, concerning its participation in those meetings, as well as the level of representation, when accepting invitations. In accordance with established practice, the Chairman would hold consultations with the Bureau members who, in turn, would consult with the members of the Committee from their respective regional groups. The Working Group also recommended that the General Assembly make appropriate budgetary provisions to cover such activities in 1997.

3. Pattern of conferences

5. The Working Group noted that, during the year, the Special Committee had closely followed the guidelines set forth in the resolutions of the General Assembly on the pattern of conferences, in particular resolution 50/206 of 23 December 1995. By organizing its programme of work effectively, holding extensive consultations, working in informal sessions and streamlining the work of the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance, which had had a shorter session than in previous years, the Committee had been able to curtail considerably the number of its formal meetings. The Working Group recommended that the Special Committee continue to make optimum and effective use of conference-servicing resources.

6. The Working Group decided to recommend that, taking into account the probable workload of the Special Committee for 1997, the Committee consider holding its meetings in accordance with the following schedule:

(a) Plenary

February/June	As required
July	Up to 20 meetings (6-8 meetings a week)

(b) Subsidiary bodies

May/June	15 meetings (1-4 meetings a week)

7. It was understood that that programme would not preclude the holding of any ad hoc meetings that might be warranted and that the Special Committee might, in early 1997, review the scheduled meetings on the basis of any new developments. The Working Group recommended that, subject to any directives given by the General Assembly, the Special Committee, while fulfilling its mandate, should strive to keep its meetings to a minimum.

4. Control and limitation of documentation

8. The Working Group noted that, during the year, the Special Committee had taken further measures to control and limit its documentation in compliance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, in particular resolutions 34/50 of 23 November 1979, 39/68 of 13 December 1984 and 50/206 B of 23 December 1995. The Working Group recommended that, consistent with the goal of limiting documentation, the Special Committee streamline its report to the General Assembly.

9. By its resolution 50/206 B, the General Assembly approved the recommendation of the Special Committee to replace its verbatim record by summary records. Having reviewed the need for such records, the Working Group decided to recommend to the Special Committee that it maintain its summary records.

10. The Working Group noted with concern the decision of the Department of Public Information to suspend its coverage of the Special Committee and its subsidiary body and recommended to the Special Committee that it urge the General Assembly to request the Department to resume full coverage of the activities of the Special Committee.

5. Question of the list of Territories to which the Declaration is applicable

11. The Working Group decided to recommend that the Special Committee continue consideration of the question at its next session, subject to any directives that the General Assembly might give at its fifty-first session.

6. International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism

12. Noting that the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism provided for the holding of seminars alternately in the Caribbean and the Pacific regions, the Working Group decided to recommend to the Special Committee that it organize in 1997 a seminar in the Caribbean region, to be attended by representatives of all Non-Self-Government Territories.

13. The Working Group further decided to recommend that the Special Committee invite United Nations organs, agencies and institutions to apprise the Secretary-General of actions they have taken in implementation of General Assembly resolution 46/181 of 19 December 1991 relating to the Plan of Action and submit a report to the Assembly at its fifty-second session.

7. Participation of representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories in the work of the Special Committee

14. The Working Group decided to recommend that the participation of representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories in the work of the Special Committee at Headquarters, as recommended by the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, should continue to be facilitated through the reimbursement by the United Nations of the expenses relating to their participation under the terms of the guidelines amended by the Committee and approved by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. In that regard, the Working Group decided to recommend that the Special Committee consider the guidelines at its plenary meetings with a view to amending them further, where appropriate.

8. Integration of the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance with the Special Committee

15. The Working Group may recall that the proposal for integration, which was made by the delegation of Papua New Guinea, was discussed at length by the Open-ended Working Group of the Special Committee on 29 March 1996. It was felt that, for further consideration, the delegation of Papua New Guinea should prepare a written proposal comparing the mandates and functions of the Special Committee and of its subsidiary body. The delegation of Papua New Guinea submitted the written proposal on the question of integration. The Working Group addressed the issue and decided to recommend to the Special Committee that it defer any action in this regard until further examination of the proposal during the next session of the Special Committee, in 1997.